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From the Series Grounded

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Down the Hall

Joan Reese

Snapshot Outside the Ladies Room

A checkered hijab shields her head, a student kneels,
back to this hall, bare feet expose themselves to all
the women who must pass by here. Her soles' skin
leathered as she tilts toward carpet tiles whose corners meet
her lowered forehead, angled east. The land she seeks
is far from us but still its twin's the Texas dust
that's tamed today by Texas rain. She bows, then lifts,
then bows again, recites her faith in words so thin
they slip right through both windowed wings
framing this hall, and no one listens as she prays
except a pair of carrion crows who roost
upon a concrete ledge, their shimmering capes smoothed
rainfall wet, their skulls a naked, wounded red.



Lady Red Trexiea Hernandez

Registry

Jiaan Powers

I forget your name.
I remember your face.
That afternoon in class
We had to be fingerprinted.

We were astonished.
Outside the world was
All rumble and rain.
Inside my world fell to dust.
God? Where are you?
We were herded out
Into the city storm.
I remember, too
Looking back at the windows.
And then we were gone
Into the mountains
Deep into China
I and the poets.
Who could have known
Those sunsets there
Would stay the lights in our eyes
And open doors for our words
To tend our mystic selves,
And see beyond into
The realms of God.



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